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ABSTRACT

The use of the Values Inventory to clarify institutional identity at California State University, Long Beach, is described. The inventory was used as part of a project that sought to: (1) identify institutional values shaping decision-making: and (2) promote awareness of value issues in higher education. The Values Inventory was used to interview 83 faculty and staff about perceptions of institutional culture, values, and issues. The open-ended interview responses were content analyzed and the following themes emerged: commitment to the institution, unity/community, humanistic values, academic quality, educational opportunity, academic freedom, ethical values, and institutional identity. Qualitative data from the inventory were also analyzed for metaphoric content. It was estimated that at least 65 percent of the metaphors found in the interview transcripts involved emotive ventilation. While about 75 percent of the metaphors were rated as having negative application to the primary subjects, about 20 percent were positive, and about 5 percent were neutral. It is concluded that the inventory is useful to administrators as a barometer of organizational culture, as catalyst for value-laden dialogue, and as a bridge to new perceptions for the university. The interview guide is appended. (SW)

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THE VALUES INVENTORY: A PROCESS FOR CLARIFYING INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

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THE VALUES INVENTORY: A PROCESS FOR CLARIFYING INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

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California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) entered into a study of institutional values as part of an eight-campus consortium sponsored by the Society for Values in Higher Education. In the spring of 1983 a Steering Committee was formed to guide the project, and David Deshler, visiting scholar from Cornell University, was appointed to serve as Project Director, assisted by the staff of the Center for Faculty Development, CSULB.

The purposes of the project at CSULB were to: (1) stimulate discussion and dialogue on institutional values which shape decision-making processes, (2) promote heightened awareness of value issues in higher education, and (3) improve decision making through awareness of value issues.

This paper discusses the methodology of the Values Inventory and its subsequent uses in the process of clarifying institutional identity. Also included is an analysis of metaphors used by interviewees and a discussion of the potential of this approach.

Established in 1949, CSULB is a relatively new institution with few traditions, and its identity is in the development stages. The largest of nineteen separate institutions organized as The California State University system, CSULB has over sixty academic departments administered in nine schools. For some years the University has maintained one of the largest graduate enrollments of non-doctorate granting institutions in the nation. The very rapid growth of the institution made it a particularly appropriate place to study institutional values and institutional culture.

The Values Inventory

The first stage of the project, a Values Inventory, included a review of institutional documents and the conducting of eighty-three in-depth interviews of faculty and staff members from throughout the University. These interviews focused on the employees' perceptions of institutional culture, what is emphasized or neglected by the organization or its parts, and what appears to be valued or at issue. Qualitative, open-ended approaches to interviewing were used in order to appreciate the variety and uniqueness of personal perspectives and value orientations of interviewees toward their University. Definitions of the institutional situation in the

words of the interviewees rather than in the categories identified in advance by the researcher were requested. The distinct value of qualitative responses generally does not lie in counting similar responses but rather in generating unique views, perspectives, descriptions, and explanations of the nature and variety of situations and events. An Interview Guide (see Appendix) was used as a starting point for interviews, which tended to last from forty-five minutes to as long as two hours in a few cases; the average length of time was sixty minutes.

It was decided by the project team that a purposive sample of interviewees was to be used in order to insure representation according to employee position. Table I below depicts the distribution of qualitative in-depth interviews according to employee position.

TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS ACCORDING TO EMPLOYEE POSITION

Employee Position	Number of Interviews
Department Secretaries	10
Part-Time Faculty	9
Full-Time Faculty	33
Department Chairs	12
Deans	10
Administrators	5
Miscellaneous Community	4
Total	83

The administrators in senior positions were selected as a population. Department chairpersons were selected at random using a random numbers table. Full-time faculty were then selected at random from the remaining departments, and so forth for part-time faculty and secretaries, so that each department had at least one person as an informant.

Visiting scholar David Deshler interviewed the administrators, deans, and department chairpersons; his outsider status provided a greater basis for candor with persons who were known to many. The other employee positions were interviewed

by professionals who were given instruction and supervision in this interview process. Interviewers reported that subjects were almost without exception willing to be interviewed. The transcripts reflect unusual candor and expressions of appreciation for the opportunity to share. Care was taken to protect the confidentiality of interviewees.

Upon completion of the interviews, project staff content-analyzed interview transcripts for thematic issues. The value issues that emerged clustered around eight different themes: (1) Commitment to the Institution, (2) Unity/Community, (3) Humanistic Values, (4) Academic Quality, (5) Educational Opportunity, (6) Academic Freedom, (7) Ethical Values, and (8) Institutional Identity. Obviously the categories are not discrete; there is considerable overlap among many of these issues. Nevertheless, project staff felt that the individual perceptions elicited in interviews could be articulated around these eight themes. The theme "Institutional Identity" was selected by the Steering Committee as a focus for subsequent activities.

A full report, Values Inventory for California State University, Long Beach, was written by David Deshler, Peggy Smith, and David Whitcomb, with assistance from David Gray. From this a Summary of the Values Inventory for California State University, Long Beach was produced.

The longer report of the Values Inventory was distributed to the President and to all deans and was used as the basis for discussion at a Deans' Retreat. Members of the Steering Committee, of course, received copies of all reports written. The Summary of the Values Inventory was distributed to all department chairs, and to faculty members upon request, as well as to all persons who were interviewed. Content of the report relevant to specific task forces or committees of the administration or Academic Senate was referred (i.e., Task Force on Criteria for Retention, Tenure, and Promotion; University Advisory Committee on Affirmative Action). On two occasions interviewers and interviewees were invited to meet together to discuss the report. Approximately thirty persons attended each of these occasions with concerned interest.

Analysis of Metaphors

Qualitative data from the Values Inventory also were analyzed for their metaphoric content. This material was made available to Steering Committee members and administrators in the form of a paper, "Metaphors and Organization Culture: A Tool for Administrative Reflection on Higher Education Values," by David Deshler. In this analysis of metaphors a broad definition was used; a popular metaphor is

"any comparison that cannot be taken literally" (Bartel, 1983, p. 3). It was also assumed that metaphors have two subjects: a principal subject and a secondary subject, both of which are regarded as systems of belief.

Using the broad definition of popular metaphor described above, David Deshler created a metaphor data protocol that provided three columns: (1) secondary metaphorical subject; (2) primary subject; and (3) valence--the positive, negative, or neutral meaning inferred by the use of the metaphor in context. For example, the term "rocking the boat" was copied from the transcript as a secondary metaphorical subject. The primary subject, "faculty with new ideas," was placed in the second column. An examination of the context revealed that the metaphor creator viewed the boat rocking features of the metaphor as positive rather than negative or neutral. All metaphors were copied in this way during a complete reading of all eighty-three transcripts. After the metaphor data protocol was completed, an analysis of primary subjects in column two was conducted, and sixteen primary subject categories were identified. They are listed in Table II along with the number of secondary subjects and their valences according to each category.

TABLE II

NUMBERS OF METAPHORS DISTRIBUTED ACCORDING TO PRIMARY SUBJECT CATEGORIES AND RATER JUDGMENTS REGARDING THE POSITIVE, NEGATIVE, OR NEUTRAL MEANING AS USED BY THE INFORMANT IN CONTEXT

Primary Subjects	# Secondary Subject Metaphors	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Faculty	66	15	4	47
University	59	15	3	41
Students	36	10	2	24
Administration	35	1	3	31
Faculty/Administration Relations	31	3	1	27
Curriculum/Programs/Instruction/Quality	20	8	1	11
Fiscal Decisions	14	0	0	14
Regulations	13	3	0	10
Schools and Departments	10	0	0	10
Teaching	9	4	0	5
Faculty Promotion Process	8	0	0	8

TABLE II (cont.)

Primary Subjects	# Secondary Subject Metaphors	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Research	4	3	0	1
Faculty/Student Relations	3	0	0	3
Collective Bargaining	3	0	0	3
People	3	0	0	3
Alumni	1	0	0	1
Totals	315	62	14	239

Of the eighty-three transcripts that were reviewed for metaphors, approximately three-quarters of them yielded metaphoric data. Some informants were very articulate, but apparently did not resort to metaphors or interviewers failed to record them. It is beyond the purpose of this paper to explore cognitive styles and the use of metaphor; however, it is interesting to ask why some persons fail to express themselves metaphorically or to inquire concerning the requisites for extensive use of metaphor during informal conversation. The median number of metaphors per transcript was 3.9. Many transcripts contained as many as six. There was apparently no difference regarding numbers of metaphors identified according to types of informants. Transcripts from administrator informants tended to yield slightly more metaphors than from other groups.

Table III presents a few illustrative metaphors taken from these data:

TABLE III

Metaphor/Secondary Subject	Primary Subject	Valence
regenerated body	faculty retirements & new hires	+
infancy of institution	CSULB at present	+
enormous industry	university education	-
walking on egg shells	avoiding conflict with administration	-
forced to jump through hoops	students	0

TABLE III (cont.)

Metaphor/Secondary Subject	Primary Subject	Valence
blind to public eye	university achievements	-
forced to put in time	students taking general education	-
upward mobile track	student achievement	+
bottom line perspective	administration	-

Uses of Metaphorical Analysis

We have identified at least three organizational uses of metaphors derived from an analysis of interview data on organization culture. First, administrators of higher education can reflect on these data as linguistic artifacts of organizational culture. Metaphors can be viewed as barometers of organizational climate for administrative decision making. Second, administrators can use these data as catalysts for value-laden dialogue among campus leaders. And third, these data can be used as a bridge to new possibilities for conceptualizing the future of the organization.

A Barometer of Organizational Climate

From the analysis of the eighty-three in-depth interviews, a broad range of value issues was identified. It is from the metaphors that one can derive the emotion-laden quality of organization culture at this University. The use of metaphors apparently provided a safe catharsis for interviewees. We estimate that at least 65% of the metaphors listed involved emotive ventilation. One of the first overall impressions is the extent of negative meaning that is present. Approximately 75% of the metaphors were rated as having negative application to their primary subjects. Approximately 20% were positive, and approximately 5% were neutral. At this point we do not know how to interpret this, since comparative data from other institutions are not available. Such negative use of metaphors may simply be reflective of higher education organization culture or it may reflect a particular situation at California State University, Long Beach. Another interpretation possibility may lie in the observation that human beings in general tend to be much more colorful and descriptive in describing their complaints than their blessings. Literary scholars have observed that Dante was much more graphic in his visualizations of the Inferno than of the Paradisium.

Although 75% of these metaphors were applied negatively toward primary subjects, the metaphors may be viewed as surface manifestations of underlying positive values that are temporarily frustrated. When viewed this way, one can detect a hunger for appreciation, recognition, status, responsibility, and active participation in governance.

As *Catalyst*

A second and important use of metaphors as linguistic cultural artifacts is as a catalyst for discussion by key campus leaders, both faculty and administrators. A full list of metaphors from the survey is used for background reading. Such discussions have the benefit of getting attitudes and feelings out in the open, to be talked about and further understood. This discussion process revolves around some of the following questions:

- Which of the metaphors (from the analysis) seemed to have real validity as you read them?
- Which were merely cliches?
- Which were the ones that disturbed or upset you?
- Which ones caused you to think more deeply? Or puzzled you?
- Are there clusters of metaphors which seem to be (inter)related?

There is value in talking about the implications of these metaphors, clarifying what they may tell us about our institution.

As *a Bridge to New Possibilities*

Metaphors can also create new self-understanding. Groups of leaders in higher education can use selected metaphors derived from the interviews as bridges to new possibilities of self-understanding and identity. These leaders can also be involved in creating metaphors that may in turn shape the direction of organization renewal. Two decades of work in organization consulting have led Sibbet and Cawood (1983, p. 154) to a common assumption that "imagery and metaphor play a central role in guiding decisions at both organizational and individual levels, and that organization change often involves working directly with this base of imagery." Perceptual change is at the heart of organization change at both the conscious and unconscious levels. Involving leaders in creating positive metaphors is one way to challenge basic assumptions and to break down barriers to strategic thinking.

At CSULB several groups have been engaged in brainstorming new metaphors of University potentiality. The traditional process of brainstorming was used following the plan of recording each metaphor as presented without discussion or evaluation. When we asked groups to do this, we suggested that they express their thoughts about

what the University could be--what we would like it to be in the future. The first group developed sixty-two metaphors in thirty-five minutes. We found these brainstorming sessions to be cognitively exciting and mind-expanding. We conceived of the sessions as brief fifteen-to-twenty-minute sessions, but participants had so much fun the sessions stretched from forty-five minutes to over an hour in some cases.

It is our observation that it is exhilarating to be in a group involved in this creative intuitive process; we happened on to this pleasant surprise without clear expectations. This we have come to refer to as organization reflective learning, which is as significant as organization analytical learning. This creative brainstorming can focus on any group of metaphors (from the analysis) where change and improvement are desired. A facilitator requests of the group: "Let us create some metaphors on each of the (secondary) subjects chosen here, metaphors which are positive--what we would like to see." We also suggest to administrators that they make use of this created reservoir of positive metaphors when communicating within the organization.

Summary

The Values Project at CSULB is still in progress. Currently three selected groups are each developing a list of core values of the institution. The three lists will be integrated into a final list. These values will then be institutionalized as the institution reconsiders its mission and goals and as each school considers its goals in the light of these values.

In summary, the Values Inventory appears to have considerable and untapped usefulness for administrators in higher education, as a barometer of organizational culture, as catalyst for value-laden dialogue, and as a bridge to new possibilities of perception for the institution.

1. Introduction/Orientation.
   a. Purposes of project.
   b. Sponsorship by Society for Values in Higher Education, New Haven, Connecticut - eight-campus consortium.
   c. Questions?

2. Specifics - Interviewing.
   a. Type of interview—open-ended, qualitative responses unique to each respondent.
   b. Time frame (45 minutes).
   c. Negotiate setting (minimize interruptions/free time).
   d. Confidentiality issues—use of data to identify values issues on campus.
   e. Reporting findings to Steering Committee for project.
   f. Questions?

3. Identify Issues.
   Q: "What do you regard as one of the important value conflicts on this campus?"
      a. Can you cite a specific example or a critical incident that illustrates this issue?
      b. What would you call this particular value?
      c. How does this issue personally affect you?
      d. Recap/summarize this value.

4. Identify Additional Issue(s) Using Probes Listed Above.

5. In your opinion, what gets emphasized and has high priority on this campus?

6. What values are in danger of being eroded?

7. Are there any "mirage values" on this campus?
   Q: "At least one author has referred to 'mirage values'—those values which seem to evaporate when closely examined, values this institution espouses but on close examination are not really operative or supported."

8. What single value, in your opinion, deserves more attention at this university?

9. What single value should be emphasized less at this university?

10. Describe the three most pivotal events that have occurred since the founding of CSULB.
    (1)
    (2)
    (3)

11. What is the <u>best</u> thing that has occurred at CSULB during the past two years?

12. What is the <u>worst</u> thing that has occurred at CSULB during the past two years?

13. What distinctive competencies does CSULB possess?

14. What competencies does it need to develop?

15. What five short, descriptive phrases or adjectives best describe CSULB?
    (1)
    (2)
    (3)
    (4)
    (5)

16. To what extent are people encouraged to be collaborative and mutually supportive?

17. How would you describe the decision-making climate at CSULB?

18. To what extent is CSULB a place where people are happy with their work?

19. How would you describe the way employees are treated?

20. How would you describe the way students are treated?

21. To what extent are people encouraged to take risks?

22. What happens to new ideas?

23. To what extent is academic excellence promoted?

24. To what extent are existing procedures and regulations necessary?

25. What do you think CSULB wants to be in the future?

Notes on Taking Notes

(1) Write as much verbatim as possible. Ask the informant to slow down so you can get the exact words.

(2) Write your comments about the interview process on the cover sheet. Comment on the way the setting contributed to or inhibited the quality of data. Comment on your affective response to the informant and non-verbal indicators of the interviewer/interviewee relationship. Do you think that there is any reason for us to discount or interpret in a unique way the informant's responses due to desirability bias, sucker bias, or lack of rapport?

(3) At the end of the interview, take enough time to read over what you have written and fill in incomplete sentences or words so that someone else can read it. Also, fill in questions.

(4) Write your Theoretical Response to the interview and label it as such. Put down research questions that the interview stimulated in your mind. List concepts that are applicable to interpretation of the transcript. List any research or literature that is relevant to interpretation.

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